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SERMON

Preach'd before the

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St. James's-Chapel,

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THURSDAY, *June 7.* 1716.

B E I N G T H E

Day of Publick Thanksgiving to
Almighty God, for Supppressing the
late Unnatural Rebellion.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
W I L L I A M Lord Bishop of *Sarum.*

Publisch'd by His Majesty's Special Command.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN CHURCHILL, at the *Black Swan*
in *Pater-Noster-Row*; and JONAH BOWYER, at
the *Rose* in *Ludgate-Street.* MDCCXVI.

Price Four Pence.

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2 COR. I. 10.

*Who delivered us from so great a Death,
and doth deliver; in whom we trust,
he will yet deliver us.*



IF these Words I may say, what our Saviour did to his Hearers, of a Passage that he quoted out of the Prophet *Esay*, in the 4th of *St. Luke*, that *this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

God Almighty has, in a wonderful Manner, *delivered us from a very great Death*; he has, by a Series of strange Providences, continued this great Deliverance to us hitherto; and I hope we are met this Day, with a sincere Purpose, to express both our grateful Sentiments of what he has done, and still does for us; and our Confidence and Trust in him, *that he will yet deliver us.* To forward and assist you in which Design, I shall

I. Consider *St. Paul's Deliverance*, which he refers to in this Text; a Deliverance from
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Death,

Death, a great Death, and so great a Death; and of which he was in such imminent Danger, that he tells us, in the Verse but one before, that he despaired of Life.

II. I shall take a View of *our own* Case. And if we have been threatned with a very great Death, the Destruction of all that is dear to us; (and this we have been so near unto, that, in the Eye of Man, there was no Prospect of Escape; but *we were press'd*, as the Apostle words his Case, *out of Measure, above Strength*, above our own Strength and Power to help our selves, even to Desperation; so that none could save us, but he that he tells us saved him, even *he that raised the Dead*;) and if we have been delivered from this great Death, and are still delivered; I may, I suppose, with good Reason, press you to imitate our Apostle's Behaviour upon his Deliverance.

1. By acknowledging God to be the Author and Continuer of our Deliverance.

2. By offering up our Praises and Thanksgivings to him for them.

3. By raising in our selves, from a just Sense of what God has done, and does do for us, a Ground of Trust and Confidence in him for the future, that he that has delivered, and does deliver, will also yet deliver us.

I. I am to consider *St. Paul's* Deliverance; a Deliverance from a great Death. That this
great

great Death was some imminent Danger that he was in in *Asia*, is certain, from the 8th Verse of this Chapter; where he says, *I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of the trouble that came to us in Asia*: From whence, the same Thread of Discourse is continued down to the Text. But what Particular Trouble it was, that he met with there, being not agreed upon by Learned Men; I shall beg your Patience, while I endeavour to settle that Point.

Some of the Ancients, particularly *Tertullian*, (who is also followed by modern Commentators) do suppose the great Death, or great Danger of Death, mention'd in the Text, to be the same with that which he refers to in the 15th Chapter of his First Epistle; where he speaks, v. 32. of *his fighting with beasts at Ephesus*; which was the Metropolis of the Lesser *Asia*. And some are for understanding both one and the other, of an actual Encounter that he had with wild Beasts, on the Theatre there; to which he was condemn'd, as a Criminal; and from which he was miraculously deliver'd, by the mighty Power of God. But I must confess, I think the Reason urged against this Interpretation, is of great Weight; *viz.* That it cannot be supposed, that so remarkable a Passage of his Life, so wonderful a Preservation, would have been omitted; either by himself, in the 11th Chapter of this Epistle, where he particularly enumerates several of his Dangers and Deliverances; or by *St. Luke*, in the Ac-

Account he gives us of him in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

And indeed, there is nothing in the Expressions in either place, that does necessarily infer, that he was actually under Execution, and then deliver'd from it ; but rather under Sentence, or Designation to Death : For in the 15th Chapter of the first Epistle, what we read, *If I have fought*, may be read, *If I had fought* ; *i. e.* If I had been actually exposed to a Combat with the Beasts, as I was designed for it. And in the Verse before my Text, he only says, that he *had the sentence of death in himself* ; *i. e.* He look'd upon himself, as one under Sentence of Death ; one that was designed and intended for the Slaughter. So that there is no Necessity, to gather from either of these places, that by the Death, from which he was delivered, is meant an actual Execution thereof ; but rather only a Designation to it. And then we need not have recourse to Fancy, to supply a supposed Defect in St. *Luke's* History ; For we shall find in the 19th Chapter of the *Acts*, an Account of a great Danger, which he was delivered from in *Asia* ; a great Tumult rais'd in *Ephesus*, by *Demetrius* and the Craftsmen, upon Occasion of St. *Paul's* Preaching against the Superstition and Idolatry of that place ; where his two Companions were haled away to the Theatre ; probably, with a Design to throw them to the Lions ; and he himself narrowly escaped.

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The Learned *Grotius* would refer us to the following Chapter, *Acts* 20. v. 19. for an Account of this great Death ; where *St. Paul* tells the Elders of *Ephesus*, whom he had convened at *Miletus* ; *Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, how I have served God with tears and temptations ; that is, Tryals and Persecutions, that beset me, by the lying in wait of the Jews.*

But this seems to be too general an Account of the Matter ; and does not satisfy the Doubt, what particular Passage of his Life it is, that he has an Eye to in the Text. And indeed, I see no Reason to believe, but that *St. Paul*, in this general Account of his Sufferings in *Asia*, had a Regard, among the rest, to that particular Story in the foregoing Chapter : For he seems to refer to all the Troubles, that happen'd to him, from his first coming into *Asia* ; And why then should it be imagin'd, he overlook'd so remarkable a one as this ?

'Tis true, he says of those, that *they beset him by the lying in wait of the Jews* ; But whoever consults the Story, in the foregoing Chapter, will see Cause to believe, that the *Jews* had a Hand in that Matter ; for, 'tis plain, they were very busy in that Tumult ; and, we may be sure, with no good Design to *St. Paul*.

There is a Reason urged, why that Expression of his, in his first Epistle, mention'd before, of his *fighting with Beasts at Ephesus* ; cannot relate to this Danger, in *Acts* 19 ; because,

cause, as 'tis said, That Epistle was wrote before this Tumult happen'd at *Ephesus* : And if this be true, 'tis unanswerable.

I do not think my self obliged at present, to enquire nicely into this Matter ; and shall only say, that there is great Reason to believe, that that first Epistle was written, not as the Author of the Postscript, whoever that was, says, from *Philippi* ; which, as we read in *Acts* 16. is a City in *Macedonia* ; for there are no Salutations in it from the Saints in *Macedonia* ; but rather from some Place in *Asia*, from whence he sends Salutations in the 19th Verse of the last Chapter ; *The Churches in Asia salute you* : And particularly from *Ephesus* ; where he proposes, at the 8th Verse, to stay still *Pentecost* : *I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost*.

But yet, if it be objected, that he went away from *Ephesus* immediately after the quieting of this Uproar ; as some conclude from the first Verse of the 20th Chapter of the *Acts* ; where it is said, after the Uproar was ceased, *Paul called to him the Disciples, and embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia* : And if this should be admitted as a Reason, why his First Epistle could not be written from thence after this Uproar ; and consequently, his Fighting with Beasts at *Ephesus*, mention'd in that Epistle, cannot refer thereto : yet I am sure, 'twill afford a good Argument for That for which I am much more concern'd, that my Text has a particular Relation thereto. For 'tis

'tis certain, his Second Epistle was written from *Macedonia*: And if he went so immediately from *Ephesus*, upon his Escape of the Danger of this tumultuous Uproar, into *Macedonia*, from whence he writes this Epistle; what Danger can it be so probably suppos'd to be, from which he blesses God in the beginning of this Epistle for delivering him, and of which he seems so solicitous to inform the *Corinthians*, as this which he so lately and so narrowly escaped in that same Place, which in the Verse but one before my Text, he makes the Scene of it, *viz. Asia*?

I know the Learned *Lightfoot* will not allow this to be the great Death there mentioned; and his Argument is, because we do not read of any the least Damage that actually happen'd to him in that Tumult. But with all due Reverence to the Ashes of so Great a Man, I cannot think his Argument to be of any Force; for certainly a Man may be, and truly said to be, in great and eminent Danger of Death, tho' he may be preserved by the good Providence of God, from actually sustaining any the least Hurt.

I doubt not, our Apostle thought himself to be, and really was in very great Danger, both at *Jerusalem*, when more than Forty of the *Jews* had bound themselves under a Curse, that they would neither Eat nor Drink till they had killed him; and also at *Damascus*, when the *Jews* had taken Counsel to the same Purpose,

and he was glad to be let down the Wall in a Basket by Night, to avoid them: He was in Danger, I say, in both Places, tho' no actual Harm happen'd to him in either.

His Two Companions in the Tumult I have been now speaking of, were hurried away by the Rabble to the Theatre; it may be, as Dr. *Lightfoot* himself yields, and I think I may say most probably, with a Design to cast them to the Lyons; and can we imagine that they had less cruel Intentions towards him? All the Fault of *Gaius* and *Aristarchus* was, that they were Paul's Companions in Travel; 'twas he that anger'd them, 'twas this *Paul* that had preach'd against their Idolatry, and *persuaded and turned away much People*, Verse 26. and 'twas for His Sake that the others were laid hold on; And would they not much rather have halled him to the Theatre, and more certainly have cast him to the Lyons, if by the Advice of his Friends, and kind Intimation of their Designs, given him by the *Astarchæ*, he had not been hinder'd from appearing publickly among them? And if those were their Intentions concerning him, he might well look upon his Escape as a Deliverance from a very great Death.

But *Eftius* has an Objection against Their Interpretation of that Passage in his First Epistle, concerning his fighting with Beasts at *Ephesus*, who understand it of his being exposed to the Lyons, as *Ignatius* was; which may be urged against my Interpretation of this Place: And it is

is this ; that the Punishment of casting to Lyons, was a Punishment only for Slaves, and viler Persons, but not for a Free-Man, and Citizen of *Rome*, as was *St. Paul* : Now this Objection would signify something, if it could be suppos'd, that a Rabble always acted prudently, and upon Consideration ; and that Zeal for a false Worship and Interest, did never carry Men to illegal and unjustifiable Actions ; and if *St. Paul* himself had never elsewhere met with Treatment, from which his Character, as a *Roman*, ought to have secured him.

But we read in the 22d of the *Acts*, that he was Bound at *Jerusalem* with Thongs, and had been Scourged too, notwithstanding his being a *Roman*, if he had not in the nick of Time told the *Centurion* that he was so : Nay, in *Acts* 16. which comes nearer to this Case, when he had cast a *Spirit of Divination* out of a *Damsel*, who by her soothsaying had brought much Gain to her Masters ; and when her Masters saw that the hopes of their Gain was gone, they lay hold on *Paul* and *Silas*, draw them into the Market-Place, raise the Rabble, and instigate the Magistrates against them, inso-much that they beat them with many Stripes, Imprison and put them in the Stocks ; which was so very unjustifiable a Treatment of Men that were *Romans*, that when the Magistrates were informed that they were so, and insisted upon their Privilege, they were glad to stoop,

and come themselves in Person, and beseech them to come forth of the Prison.

So that it is no strange or improbable Thing, that the Men of *Ephesus*, who were zealous in their Idolatry, especially when they were set on by those who found their Account in propagating and asserting their Superstitious Worship, should design our Apostle, who preach'd against the Idol of the one, and consequently the Mammon of the other, to a Punishment that they could not justify: Nay, we plainly read in the Story, that the Officer told them, that their Zeal had transported them to do that, for which they were in Danger to be called to an Account.

I know but one Objection more that can be pretended, and 'tis this; that in the several Accounts of these Matters, of his Danger at *Ephesus*, and of the great Death in the Text, mention'd by St. *Luke* and St. *Paul*, he himself seems to have had very different Apprehensions of them. As to that at *Ephesus*, he seems to be altogether unapprehensive of any Danger; for 'tis said, that he would voluntarily have gone into the Tumult, but that the Disciples hinder'd him; whereas of this he complains, that he was press'd out of Measure, above Strength, that he despair'd of Life, and look'd upon his Escape as little less than a Resurrection from the Dead. To which I have Two Things to say:

1. That

1. That tho' *St. Paul* would voluntarily have enter'd in to the People, had not the Christians hinder'd him ; yet it does not from hence follow, that he was unapprehensive of the Danger, which by so doing he should expose himself to. For 'twas no strange Thing, in the first Ages of the Church, for Christians to express their Zeal and Love for Christ, by knowingly and willingly running into Sufferings and Death. Nay, our very Apostle, when the Prophet *Agabus* had foretold, that if he went up to *Jerusalem*, the *Jews* would bind him, and deliver him into the Hands of the *Gentiles* ; and when the Christians endeavour'd with Prayers and Tears, to hinder him from taking that Journey, they could not prevail ; but he calls those Endeavours of theirs, to keep him from taking that Journey, *a breaking of his Heart* ; and declares his Readiness, *not only to be bound, but to dye at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus*. But,

2. Supposing that he was unapprehensive of the Danger at that Time, when he would have gone in to the People ; what hinders, but that afterwards, when the Brethren had inform'd him better ; when he heard what was done to his two Companions ; especially, when he had that Message sent him by the *Asian Præfects*, that he should not venture himself abroad : What, I say, hinders, but that, when the Matter was over, upon a reflex View in cool Blood, he may make another Judgment of the Danger
he

he had been in, than his Zeal would suffer him to do in the Time of Action?

I take it therefore, that this great Death, mention'd in my Text, which God deliver'd St. *Paul* from in *Asia*, was the great Danger of Death, which he was in upon Occasion of that Tumult, which *Demetrius* and the Craftsmen rais'd against him at *Ephesus*, the chief City of *Asia*; of which we have a large Account, in the fore-mention'd 19th of the *Acts*. And to justify this Opinion, I might have urg'd the Authority of several Learned Men, who expound this Place the same way, and give good Reasons for it: But omitting them, I have rather chose to answer the Objections, which Men of another Opinion in this Matter have advanc'd against it: And those being remov'd, I think it sufficient to say,

1. That 'tis a reasonable *Postulatum*, that so remarkable a Deliverance, as St. *Paul* makes this in the Text, would not probably have been omitted by St. *Luke*, in the History of his Life. And then, this being allow'd;

2. That there is no particular Danger, which St. *Paul* was in in *Asia*, mention'd by St. *Luke*, but this which I contend for, which happen'd to him at *Ephesus*. And that this was a great Death, or a very great Danger of Death, may be gather'd from several Circumstances in the Story: From the Consideration of the Persons from whom he was in Danger; from the Provocation he had given them; from what they actu-

actually did upon that Provocation : From whence we likewise probably conjecture, what they would have done further, if they had had Opportunity.

The Persons from whom he was in Danger, were not only a Rabble, got together in a tumultuous manner, they knew not why ; tho' from Them there's no more Justice or Mercy to be expected, than from the raging Waves of the Sea in a Tempest : but also superstitious Bigots in a false Religion ; zealous Worshippers of a Goddess of Mens making, and of a wonderful Image, pretended to be dropp'd from Heaven : And these were stirr'd up by those who got their Livelihoods, much Wealth, by making Objects for their Idolatrous Worship ; little Silver Boxes, with the Image, or Picture, of their Goddess in them, for their Adoration.

The Provocation he had given them, was no less than openly declaring against their Goddess, and Image-Worship ; saying, that they were no Gods that were made with Hands ; That the Pictures and Images, which they made and sold, and the other worshipp'd, were not fit Objects for such Worship : And by this means, their Goddess, they apprehended, was in Danger to be despised, her Temple defecrated, her Worship forsaken, and consequently (which no doubt some of them were more concern'd for,) their Craft, whereby they got their Wealth, would be likely to come to nought.

nought. And in what a furious manner, may we imagine, would these blind Zealots, push'd on by the designing Craftsmen, express their Resentments of so great an Injury?

That they did so, we read at the 28th Verse: They first make a publick and clamorous Acknowledgment, of the Greatness of their Goddes, and of their particular Relation to her; *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*: And then prepare to revenge the Affront offer'd her, by Sacrificing to her those that gave it. They lay Hands upon St. Paul's Companions, (meeting with them first) and hurry them away to the Theatre, with a Design, as I observed before, to expose them there to wild Beasts: And however they chang'd their Minds, and suffer'd them to escape; yet 'tis reasonable, from hence,

To conjecture, That could they have caught him, they would not have failed to have cast him to the Lions, who was the principal in that unpardonable Injury; when they were so near doing it to those, whose only Guilt (that appears) was, that they were of his Company.

This then was that great Death, or Danger of Death, that threatned St. Paul at *Ephesus* in *Asia*, and into which he was very nigh running himself. For the 30th Verse tells us, that he would have enter'd in to the People, when they were in that mad Ferment and Uproar.

But

But it pleased God, that the Disciples should not suffer him to go among them; nay, which is more remarkable, to order it so, that the very *Asiarchæ*, the Chief of *Asia*, as our Translators render the Word; (but they were properly the Præfects, or Officers, that were appointed to look after those barbarous Executions, and who may therefore be very well supposed to know the Designs of the People concerning him) these should send to him, to keep out of the Way. And thus God's Providence made Use of those who were to have been employ'd in the Management of his Death, as Instruments in the saving of his Life.

And thus have I consider'd St. *Paul's* Deliverance from the great Death in the Text.

II. I am in the next Place to take a View of our own Case. And we shall find, that it comes very near that of St. *Paul's*, that we have been deliver'd from a very great Death, as well as he; and that the Parallel will hold in several Circumstances, both of the Danger and Deliverance.

Who delivered us, says our Apostle, *and doth deliver*; he mentions past, as well as present Deliverances. And if in applying his Case to ours, I should recount the several Deliverances of this Church and Nation, from the many secret Plots, and open Attempts, of our *Romish* Adversaries, in every Reign, since our just and necessary Departure from their Idolatrous Communion; his Example would acquit me from Impertinence. But I shall look no further back,
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than the Year 1688, wherein was the Commencement of that great Deliverance, which God has by a Series of gracious Providences continu'd to us to this Day; And all the National Blessings we have receiv'd since, even That for which we now thank him, are but so many Links in that wonderful Chain of Mercies. And 'tis but too necessary, to call the Thoughts of Many back to that Time, who were then sufficiently sensible of the imminent Danger we were in; but after they were deliver'd, the Image of their past desperate Condition soon vanish'd out of their Minds; and they were like St. James's Man, *beholding his natural Face in a Glass, who goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of Man he was*. But however Distance of Time may have lessen'd the Danger that then threaten'd us, and consequently the Deliverance from it, in some Peoples Thoughts; I will venture to call it a Death, and a great Death: For That which threatens the utter Destruction of a Thing, may very well be called Death: And that which threatens that Destruction to all Things that we value, may be term'd a great Death.

Now there is nothing that Men value more, than their own Liberties and Properties, Lives and Religion, and the Welfare of their Posterity. How great a Death then must that be, that threatens the Ruin of all these? To throw down the Mounds and Fences that secure them, and lay them open to be trampled upon and trodden down at Pleasure? How miserable is the

the Case of that People, that may be confin'd, and made Beggars at Will ; that may not be suffer'd to enjoy their Religion and Lives together ; but if they will secure these, must make Shipwreck of that ? And what an Addition to their Misery, must the dismal Prospect of the wretched Condition of their unhappy Posterity be, when they can see nothing entail'd upon them, but the most vile and abject Slavery of Body and Mind too ?

And that this great Death threatned us of this Nation, however willing some are to forget it now, I am sure every considering Person was sufficiently sensible about Twenty Eight Years ago ; and he was a strangely Sanguine Man, that did not then despair of Life. The Inundation was just breaking in upon us, and we were in such a kind of Streight, as the *Israelites* at the *Red-Sea* ; we were neither able to stand up against our Danger, nor to fly from it.

The Persons that were designing and working this great Death for us, were, like those that intended our Apostle's Destruction, superstitious Bigots, Worshippers of Saints and Images, fiery Zealots for their Religion ; who have sacrificed more Lives to it, than ever the Heathens did to their Gods : And among these, the Chief were the Craftsmen, who have made a perfect Trade of Religion ; have turned the Altars where they were Consecrated, into Tables of Money-Changers ; and the Mysteries of Faith and Godliness, into Mysteries of Gain, and growing great : That deal not only in such

petty Things, as *Demetrius* and his Craftsmen did; in small Boxes, with Images or Pictures in them, (tho' they have their *Agnus Dei's*, and little Consecrated Trinkets, their pretended Relicks that they make Advantage by;) but in Matters of much greater Concernment.

They have got the Keys of Heaven and Hell, and Purgatory too; they Trade in Absolutions, Masses, Indulgences, Plenary Indulgences; they put a Tax upon Sins, and set Heaven to Sale.

How easy is it for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

And what was the Provocation we gave them? Why, we protested against their Superstitious Fopperies and Idolatry; we declared with *St. Paul*, that they were no Gods which were made with Hands; that neither Crucifix nor Image, however curiously wrought or painted by the Artificer, nor Wafers Consecrated by the Priest, nor Saints Canonized by the Church, were fit Objects for Religious Worship; That their Morroe of Purgatory, their vain boasting Pretences to Infallibility, and to turn Bread by a few Words speaking, into the Body of their Saviour; their Empirical Remedies of Absolutions, as they apply'd them, of Masses, Indulgences, the Churches Stock of Merits of those who had more than enough for themselves, &c. that these were only Holy Cheats, to cozen Men out of their Money here, and their Souls hereafter.

And this was so insupportable an Injury, of so fatal a Consequence to their own Craft, whereby they amass'd their Wealth; that 'twas no wonder,

wonder, that when they had (as they thought) a fit Opportunity to do it, and a Power to back them, they turn'd their secret and disguised Methods, whereby they had been long endeavouring our Ruin under-hand, into more open and avow'd Attempts upon us ; that they laid hold upon some of our Companions ; and, by their Treatment of them, and Usage of others, gave us fair Intimation of what was quickly like to befall us all.

They had all Authority, Law and Power, in their own Hands : They were most wrathfully displeas'd at us ; and Religion and Interest spurr'd them on, to wreak their Fury upon us, as far as their Power would permit.

In these Circumstances 'twas not strange, if *we had the sentence of death in our selves ; if, being press'd out of measure, above strength, we despaired of life.* But he, who raises the Dead, took pity on our righteous (tho' seemingly dying) Cause : Our Deliverance was so seasonably wrought for us, in so wonderful a manner, and by such quiet and gentle Methods, that it plainly appear'd to be *his doing, who is a present help in time of trouble ; who only doth marvellous things ;* and who many times chuses to appear, for his Servants, as well as to them, not in great Winds, and Earthquakes, and Fire, but in *a still, small voice.*

Thus God deliver'd Us, as well as St. Paul. And, that I may not omit one Circumstance, wherein our Cases are parallel ; As, by the Providence of God, the *Asian* Officers were in a
great

great measure the Means of his Escape ; to some of those, that were designed to have been the Instruments of our Ruin, prov'd serviceable in the Accomplishing our Deliverance.

And how wonderfully did God continue that Deliverance to us, by Securing the Government then establish'd, in its Infancy, from the Monsters that endeavour'd to destroy it in the Cradle ; by preserving the Life of the Great Instrument of it, under a weak State of Health ; notwithstanding the great Fatigues and Dangers, to which he expos'd himself ; in many Voyages and Campaigns, and the wicked Conspiracies form'd against him by his Enemies ; till he had, in Conjunction with his Confederates, brought the Common Enemy to make Peace. And when upon the Dissolution of that Confederacy, and the Disbanding of our Forces, the great Disturber of *Europe* took Occasion treacherously to break that Peace ; still Our King was living, the only Person capable, by his Character, and Interest with so many Foreign Potentates, of Accomplishing such a Work, to form a New and Glorious Alliance. But yet He had not done all that God intended, or that was necessary to compleat our Deliverance ; which, had not a Protestant Succession been settled, would have been but of short Continuance ; and before this Time, we had been under the Yoke of a Popish Government again. That precious, but declining Life, was therefore yet preserved, that He might put the Last Hand to his Great Work, by Settling the Succession to the Crown,

in the Illustrious House of *HANOVER*. And then, not till then, was he gather'd to his Fathers; leaving his Successor, our Late Gracious Queen, strengthen'd by a powerful Alliance abroad, and much secured at home by the Limitation of the Crown to a Protestant Family, to pursue and compleat his Great Designs.

And how wonderfully did the Work of the Lord prosper in her Hands, for many Years! Neither Walls, nor Works, nor Lines, nor Rivers, could stop the Victorious Progress of Her Majesty's Forces, and those of her Allies; which, under the Conduct of her Consummate General, routed the Armies of the Enemy, as oft as they engaged them, and took his Towns as certainly as they sat down before them; till by a long Series of Glorious Successes, we had reduced him so low, that we had it in our Power to have demanded what Terms we would, for our own Security, and for the Safety and Quiet of all *Europe*.

And here I could willingly cast a Veil over what follows, and heartily wish that History could do so too. But alas! 'tis a vain Wish: The Story has been told in *Gath*, and publish'd in the Streets of *Askelon*: The Daughters of the *Philistines* have rejoiced, the Daughters of the Uncircumcis'd have triumph'd.

I would not dwell upon the ungrateful Subject; and shall only say, that by a most amazing Conduct, we were so far thrown into the Power of the Ambitious Aspirer to an Universal Monarchy;

narchy ; and the Way was so prepar'd for the *Pretender* to this Crown to come over, with his necessary Attendants, *Popery* and *Slavery* ; that there seem'd little more wanting to compleat the Design of our grand Enemy, and our Ruin, than for him to have said to his Viceroy, in the Words of *Jezebel* to *Abab*, *Arise and take Possession*.

And here again, *we had the sentence of death in our selves* ; but God, who had before deliver'd us, did now again deliver us, by providentially placing His Majesty on the Throne of these Kingdoms in that Critical Juncture.

There being no Disturbance at Home, nor Attempt upon us from Abroad, during the Time His Majesty was necessarily detain'd from us ; no Opposition to his Landing, but an Universal Joy express'd upon his Arrival ; we were ready to say , that *surely the bitterness of this death is past*.

But we flatter'd our selves with vain Words : Measures were then concerting abroad, for Encouraging and Assisting an Insurrection at home. And there were too many among us, like those Enemies of *David*, *Psal. 62. whose only device it was to cast him out, whom God would exalt*. Like them, *they delighted in Lies*, and were industrious to asperse His Majesty, his Illustrious Family, and his wise and just Administration, by Lies so wicked and malicious, as could proceed from none but *the Father of them* ; and so monstrously absurd, as could be swallow'd by none, but such as were *given up to strong Delusions, to believe a Lie*. And these *Lies they spake* in

in hypocrisy, speaking good words with their mouths ; pretending a Respect for the Government, and some of them Swearing to it too with their Lips, while at the same time they cursed it in their hearts, and were doing all in their Power to destroy it : By these, and other vile Methods, they corrupted the poor unthinking People, work'd them up first into Tumultuous Riots, and then into open Rebellion.

Had the Attempt been made, and supported from Abroad, when we had the first Intimation of the Design, and were little prepar'd to oppose it, having but few Forces, and many of them not to be depended upon ; this Nation must have been for some Time, a miserable Scene of Blood and Confusion, whatever might have been the final Issue at the last.

But God was pleas'd by another Providence, to embarrass the Affairs of a Neighbouring Kingdom, from which the Conspirators expected the greatest Assistance ; and to retard their wicked Enterprize, till, by the prudent Provision of the Legislative Power, and the diligent Application of the Executive, our Forces were so augmented, that by the wise Disposition of some of them, great Part of the Island was kept quiet, and many that wish'd well to the Rebels, were hinder'd from joining them ; and by the Conduct and Bravery of the others, in those Parts where they were actually in Arms, the Traytors were entirely routed. And when the *Pretender* came amongst them, to rally his scatter'd Forces, to animate them by his Presence, and retrieve his lost Game ; upon the Approach of His Majesty's Army, he fled before them, stole away by Night from the Island, leaving his Men to save themselves by flying

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into their Fastnesses ; who being pursued thither by part of the King's Troops, some of 'em have been taken, others have surrender'd, and others have been disarm'd, and so the Rebellion has been happily suppress'd.

A Rebellion, that had *one* aggravating Ingredient to blacken it, beyond former rebellions. We hardly read of one, but the Actors in it have pretended to justify themselves, by charging the Government with some notorious Violations of the Laws, some great Oppressions upon the Subject, some cruel Grievances for which they could not get Redress ; but in This there has not been the Pretence of one illegal Thing done by His Majesty ; who may justly appeal to his People, in the Words of *Samuel to Israel*, *Behold, here I am ; witness against me before the Lord, whose Ox have I taken ? Or whose Ass have I taken ? Or whom have I defrauded ? Whom have I oppress'd ?*

So unprovoked was this Rebellion, so little Reason was there given for it, and so little Grounds therefore to have expected it ; that this, if any Thing, might in some Measure excuse the unjust Surmises of some well-meaning Persons, who look'd upon the Accounts we had of Invasions and Insurrections intended, as only Artifices of Men in Power, to raise more Forces to be employ'd to other Purposes : But surely the Insurrections in *North and South Britain*, the Arms, Ammunition, and Officers sent to the Rebels from Abroad ; the Battels at *Preston* and *Dumblain*, and the *Prentender's* Landing in *Scotland*, will cure the Suspicions of those weak Persons, and Silence the Clamours of those wicked Men, who infus'd those Thoughts into the Others. And I cannot but wish at least, if I may not hope, that the happy Issue of
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this Rebellion will convince all those that were concern'd in it, or Favourers of it, that the present Settlement, against which they have been conspiring, is a *Work of God*, and that they cannot overthrow it; and make them refrain from any further Attempts against it, *least happily they be found to fight against God, who has deliver'd, and doth deliver, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* Which brings me to consider St. Paul's Behaviour upon his Deliverance, and to press you to an Imitation of it.

And *First*, let us with him, acknowledge God to be the Author of our Deliverance. 'Tis too common a Fault with the most, when they receive Mercies, whether Deliverances from Dangers, or positive Blessings, that they do not look further than Second Causes, but rest there, as if they were the Authors of all. Thus Deliverances from Sickness, are too often ascribed only to the Skill of the Physician, and the Virtue of his Medicines; the increasing of a Man's Estate, to his prudent Industry, and provident Management of it; and in publick Cases, the Peace and Prosperity of a Kingdom, to the sage Counsels, and wise Administration of those that sat at the Helm; and Successes in War, to the Conduct of the Officers, and Prowess of the Soldiers. Not but that a due Consideration ought to be had of all these, and a just Respect paid them in their proper Places and Capacities, as they are excellent Instruments in the Hand of a gracious God, for these Purposes; and indeed it wou'd be a most unjust, as well as an ungrateful Thing, not to make them all the Acknowledgments of their Services, and pay them all the Respect and Honour for them, that are consistent

with the owning the Superintendency of Providence: But not to look beyond them, not to see that wise Hand that guides and governs them, but to impute the whole to them, is such an egregious Folly, as to ascribe a curious Piece of Work to the Instruments wherewith the Artificer wrought it, and not to the Artificer that managed those Instruments. And that 'tis a high Provocation in the Eyes of God, may be gathered from that Concern which he expresses for his Honour in such Cases, especially in the Deliverances of his People, in which he is extremely Jealous lest the Glory of them should be given to any other than himself.

We have a remarkable Instance of this in *Judges 7*. where we read, that when *Gideon*, that judged *Israel*, had got together an Army of 32000 Men to go against the *Midianites*, God made him dismiss them all to 300, for this Reason, lest the Victory he intended to bestow upon them, should be imputed to the Number and Strength of their Forces; For so he tells him, at the second Verse; *The people that are with thee are too many, for me to give the Midianites into their hands. Why so? Least Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.* And for this Reason, among others, it is, that he is pleased many times to suffer a People to be brought to the last Extremity, to blast many hopeful Projects, and defeat several likely Methods for their Escape, to suffer them to come to their Wit's End, that they know not which way to turn themselves, before he interposes for their Relief; that so he may convince them, that their Deliverance was his doing; *the work of that right hand, that bringeth mighty things to pass.* Let

Let us then avoid so great a Folly, and so heinous a Provocation, as not to see and own the Finger of God, which has been so visibly concern'd in our Deliverance. Let us rather imitate the Example set us by *St. Paul*, who acknowledges that 'twas *God, who raises the dead, that delivered him from his great death.* And in *Tim. 2. 3.* where he recounts the Persecutions and Afflictions which came to him at *Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra*; he adds at *ver. 11.* that *out of them all the Lord deliver'd him.* And in the 4th Chapter of that Epistle, *v. 17.* *The Lord stood with me.* And him let us follow; and look upon all Second Causes as unactive Instruments in themselves, and no more able of themselves to work any Deliverance or Good for us, without God's Concurrence and Guidance, than the Pencil of a Painter to make a beautiful Picture, without the Painter's Hand directing it. And let us cry out with *David, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us*: Not unto our Policy, or Foresight, or Management; Not to our Strength, or Power; Not to any other Thing, than *thy name only, be given the honour*; who, we acknowledge, *hast deliver'd, and dost deliver us.* To whom,

2. Let us offer up our most devout and hearty Thanksgiving for it. *St. Paul* is a most Eminent Pattern of this Practice. There's not one of his Epistles to the several Churches founded by him, that he does not begin with giving Thanks and Glory to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. In this particularly, immediately after the Salutation at *ver. 3.* he breaks out, *Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, &c.* And in the Verse after my Text, where he asks the Assistance of their

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Prayers, in order to future Deliverances, he seems to have no (or very little) Regard to any thing else, than the Glory that would thereby redound to God : As if he desir'd a Deliverance through their Prayers, not upon the Account of any Concern or Interest of his own in it, but purely as 'twould be an Occasion of many Thanksgivings to the Gracious Author of it : *You, says he, helping together by prayers for us.* For what End? Why ; *That for the gift bestowed upon us, by the means of many persons, thanks may be given to God by many on our behalf.*

And certainly, there is not a more equitable, or reasonable Thing in the World, than that we should make this Return for his Mercies, to our most bountiful and disinterested Benefactor. Nay, if we will take *David's* Word, who was as well experienc'd in this Duty as any Man that ever liv'd upon the Earth, there is not a more delightful Employment. He says, *It is a joyful and a pleasant thing to be thankful.* And no doubt he says right : For 'tis the very Employment of Heaven ; the Business of the blessed Angels and glorify'd Spirits, to sing Hallelujahs and Praises, *to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

As we hope then to increase their Number hereafter, and join in Consort with them in Eucharistical Anthems for ever : Let us inure our selves to that which must be our Eternal Exercise, if ever we are so happy as to come among them ; *In every thing giving thanks ; and, upon all Occasions, singing and making melody in our hearts to God.* But especially, upon such Occasions as this of our present Meeting, for such Mercies as I have now recounted ; by which God has secured, and does continue to us, the Opportunity-

opportunities of doing it, in a way acceptable to himself ; *Of Singing the Lord's Song in our own Land,* and in our own Language ; Of worshipping him in the Beauty of Holiness, and offering him a reasonable Service ; Of serving him alone, without bowing to graven Images, to provoke him to Jealousy ; Of Addressing to him, thro' the alone Mediation of Jesus Christ, the One Mediator that he has appointed betwixt God and Man ; without affronting him, by joining other Intercessors with him.

O sing praises, sing praises to our God ; sing praises to our King---Sing ye praises with understanding.

3. But lastly, and to conclude : Let us imitate our Apostle, in raising (from Experiences of past and present Deliverances) a Ground of Trust and Confidence in God for future ones ; that he that has begun a good Work, and hitherto continued it, will (in his own Time) perfect it :----*Who deliver'd us,* says St. Paul, *from so great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we therefore trust, that he will yet deliver us.*

And certainly a well-grounded Trust it was, and a very reasonable Inference ; For there is no pretence for Diffidence or Distrust, where there is not a Suspicion of want either of Power, or Will to help : But what Room can there be for such a Suspicion of him, who hath given, and doth give, past and present Demonstrations of both ? Let then what God has done, and now does for us, strengthen our Faith, and confirm our Hope in him for the Time to come. Away with all distrustful Murmurings, unreasonable Jealousies, and desponding Fears : By the *great Things he has wrought for us already, whereof we rejoice,* he has given us fair Pledges, if we our selves do not
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obstruct his intended Mercies, of further and greater yet. And let us but chearfully do our Duties, and then we may rest assur'd, that God's Arm is not shortned, nor are his Bowels streightned : His Arm is as mighty as ever to bring Salvation, and he as tenderly and compassionately inclin'd towards his People ; And that he will not fail to compleat his Work, and make our Deliverance perfect, when he sees such a Deliverance fit for us, and us fit for it.

Till when, let us, with unshaken Faith, fix our Eyes upon him, *from whence cometh our Help* ; and let us expect, and *wait for his Salvation*. But let us wait in a just Sense, and grateful Acknowledgment of what he has already wrought for us, and in a chearful Co-operation with him ; Not presumptuously expecting to be always saved by Miracles, and doing nothing to help our selves ; but zealously concurring with those Methods which his Providence has pointed out for our future Safety ; in a hearty Obedience and Conformity to his Reveal'd Will, and entire Submission to his Secret one, and an absolute Resignation of our selves, and all our Concerns, to his Wise and Gracious Management ; *Possessing our Souls in patience*, till his Time comes. *O tarry the Lord's leisure ; Be strong, and he shall comfort your hearts, all ye that put your trust in the Lord. For the Vision is yet for an appointed time ; but at the end it shall speak, and not lye : Tho' it tarry, yet wait for it ; for it will surely come, it will not tarry. And in that day it shall be said, This is our God ; we have waited for him : This is the Lord ; we have waited for him. We will be glad, and rejoice in his Salvation.*



